



**NATIONAL  
FARM TO  
SCHOOL  
PROGRAM**

**Livestock and Seed Programs  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Stop 0249, Room 2092-S  
Washington, D.C. 20250**

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**TO: Livestock and Seed Programs**  
**FROM: Marion Kalb, National Farm to School Director**  
**Community Food Security Coalition**  
**RE: NO on allowing irradiated foods in schools**

I am writing in response to your request for comments on the use of irradiated products in commodity purchase programs. I strongly urge you NOT to permit irradiated foods in the National School Lunch Program, or any other USDA commodity program.

The Community Food Security Coalition is a national organization representing 265 local, state and national organizations directly engaged in programs that build community food security by linking small, family farms to low income communities through: farm to cafeteria projects, community food projects, nutrition education programs, and policy initiatives. The Coalition bases its opposition on the following:

- There is an appalling lack of research into the health effects of consuming the unique chemicals created when food is irradiated. Recent research by German scientists has shown that these chemicals caused genetic change in laboratory rats, and promote cancer growth. Even less research has been done on the long-term health effects experienced by children exposed to these chemicals.
- The sale of irradiated foods in supermarkets has been less than enthusiastic. A number of states, including Wisconsin, Florida and California have stopped carrying irradiated frozen hamburger patties due to poor sales. The irradiation industry has been looking for a market, and they view the National School Lunch Program as a way to stay in business.
- Irradiation merely masks the problems of meat processing methods that result in contaminated meat. It is a mistake to accept food irradiation as the true solution to our food contamination problem. There are proposed regulations that would strengthen inspection and testing in the meat industry that have been stalled for months in the USDA.
- Lastly, there is no regulation that requires parents, students, or school administrators, be informed that meals have been prepared with irradiated foods. All parties have the right to know what is being served in the school food programs. Using schools as a dumping ground for products that consumers are rejecting elsewhere is reprehensible.

I strongly urge you to stop the process of implementing change in this USDA policy. Use of this policy may very well create more problems than it is designed to correct.

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